

Who is that at your door? The Fire Marshal! OSHA!!



If a State Fire Marshal or a Fire Marshal from the City of Columbia, or an OSHA Officer walked in your door saying, “I’m here to inspect,” would you be ready? How should you respond? The simplest approach we need you to take is to ask the Fire Marshal or OSHA officer to show his/her credentials (from the SC Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation), briefly explain the purpose for their visit, then ask them to take a seat and wait while you call the Safety Office (WP 737-2315 or 24-hour number: cell 513-5352). Holly Bockow of the Safety Office are the designated Resident Fire Marshals and OSHA Safety Officers for DOA-owned facilities so will respond to assist the State/City Fire Marshal and OSHA officer as well as your management in addressing any fire and life safety issues they may identify.

What goes on during an OSHA/Fire Marshal inspection?

The OSHA Inspector or Fire Marshal may be conducting a routine inspection of the workplace, or investigating an employee complaint or an employee injury or illness resulting from a workplace incident. In all situations it is our right as the facility owner and employer to have our representative from the Safety Office escort OSHA and the Fire Marshal. We want to be forthcoming and truthful but we also want to ensure they are provided with authorized official information.

The inspectors will want to see relevant fire and life safety and personnel policies and programs and training and inspection documentation. They will want to inspect the worksite(s) in question and may take photographs or video. They may want to conduct private interviews with employees to see if they understand proper work procedures and safety precautions to take when exposed to workplace hazards, and to learn about how management implements our safety program. They are required to explain all of this at an opening conference and initial findings will be briefed to us at the closing conference.

We can get fined!

At the completion of or within a short time after the OSHA/Fire Marshal inspection, we will receive a formal inspection report citing if we are not in compliance with specific OSHA regulations or fire and building codes. Any non-compliance will have an associated fine with a suspense date, normally within 30 days, for correction or a plan of corrective action.

Our response

All responses to issues identified by the OSHA/Fire Marshal inspector must be coordinated with and/or come from the Safety Office. The Department of Administration will comply in making required correction. However, if there is a disagreement over interpretation or remedy then it must be made only after careful consideration by Safety, Legal and management.

Additionally, employees are encouraged to identify problems at any time and correct those on-the-spot or to report those they can't fix, i.e., either as a Work Order Request to 734-3308 or to call Safety – Holly Bockow at 737-2311 / cell 513-5354. Knowing our workplace and addressing any actual and potential safety hazards now will help us mitigate any OSHA/Fire Marshal inspection or investigation, but more importantly, keep our employees safe.